

CHAPTER SIXTEEN: THE AMERICAN CHURCH IN ITS GLOBAL CONTEXT (1866-1920)

In the hundred years following the ordination of the first missionaries (1812), the role of the missionary movement in the life of the church had expanded greatly. At the same time, the influence of the United States in the world had also expanded greatly.

The founders of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) saw themselves as outsiders engaged in a religious war against the Unitarian establishment. Their efforts in Boston and Bombay were parts of one struggle for God on every continent. A hundred years later the missionary movement through its piety had transformed the church at home, and had become the establishment. The first missionaries carried to non-Christians a faith that created a counter-culture in both lands; a century later missionaries went abroad as representatives of what they believed to be a superior Christian civilization. The early missionaries faced the opposition of the British East India Company, the skepticism of a Hawaiian king, and the restrictions of Turkish pashas. A century later, missionaries moved easily into cozy cooperation with colonial powers.

In 1812 the United States were a small outpost of Western civilization. A hundred years later they had a population greater than every European nation except Russia, had become a major industrial power, and governed an empire. American Christians entered into the national debate over whether this country's power would be used for peace or for imperialism. Finally, a "Great War" captured the passion of the nation. No group in the United States felt the burden of this war more severely than the German-Americans of the Evangelical Synod.

PART A: ADMINISTRATION OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Dwight Moody's 1886 challenge to young people to commit themselves to missionary service created the Student Volunteer Movement for Christian Missions, and a virtual army of recruits for every existing missionary society and any new societies that might be formed. The *watchword*, the slogan "the evangelization of the world in this generation," inspired thousands of idealistic young people to devote themselves to Christian service abroad. The missionary

movement flowed at high tide.

Mission Controversy in the Evangelical Synod

The Evangelical Synod had been created through the labors of European missionary societies. From the beginning, pastors and churches supported missions through those societies,¹ with funds raised at annual missionfests (*LTH* 5:10) in each congregation. By 1881 Synod churches were giving over \$6000 annually to the major missions.

Another missionary society also received support: the New York based German Evangelical Missionary Society of the United States. Oscar Lohr (1824-1907), a missionary to India of the Gossner Mission – a Lutheran Mission from Germany – fled to the United States at the time of the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. While serving German Reformed congregations in New Jersey, he convinced mission supporters among German-speaking Reformed, Lutheran, Evangelical Synod and other churches to organize this new missionary society in 1865. Under its sponsorship Lohr returned to India in 1868. Evangelical Synod pastors served on the Board of this new mission alongside others, and raised funds for it.

In 1879 Conrad Bechtold (1845-1927) read a paper (*LTH* 4:48) to his district meeting urging the Evangelical Synod to establish its own foreign mission. This proposal faced strong opposition from clergy graduates of Basel whose loyalty was to the society that sent them to America. They argued that the European societies were adequate outlets for the missionary interest of the Synod. Soon the Evangelical Synod had two missionary magazines, one advocating a Synod mission, the other opposing it; the debate throughout the Synod became heated and personal. In 1882 the Bechtold group organized a voluntary missionary society and began collecting funds.

The controversy came to the 1883 Synod meeting apparently an unresolvable conflict. At that meeting the society that sent out Lohr appealed to the Synod to take over its work. Providentially the Synod received an established mission with property and experienced leadership, and both sides were satisfied.

Evolving Mission Policy in the ABCFM²

As long as Rufus Anderson directed the ABCFM it pursued the one “great

¹From 1850 to 1866 the Kirchenverein supported the missionary societies as follows: Basel Mission \$ 10,365; Barmen Mission \$5,508; Bremen Mission \$665; Saint Chrischona Mission \$158.

²For earlier material on mission policy see Chapter 7, Part C.

object” of evangelism, and the development of self-supporting, self-governing, self-propagating native churches, leading to “devolution” and the withdrawal of the missionaries. In his later years Anderson’s views were considered old-fashioned by younger persons who believed missions to be a multi-faceted movement of cultural transformation. However, Anderson’s power and the respect in which he was held prevented any change during his administration. Following Anderson’s retirement in 1866, new views slowly began to emerge.

In 1881 the ABCFM published *The Ely Volume*.³ Funded by Alfred B. Ely and compiled by Thomas Laurie (1821-97), this volume’s intent was, “to interest some in the great work, through its incidental results, who had not yet learned to love it for its own sake.”⁴ The *Ely Volume* outlined the contributions made to Western knowledge through missionary observations and publications in the fields of geography, geology, meteorology, zoology, botany, archeology, philology, ethnography, music, religion and history. The missionaries had gone out to proclaim the Christian gospel to the world. In the process they had carefully observed that world and had made it known to the people at home. The *Ely Volume* pointed out that ABCFM missionaries had:

- given written form to over twenty languages, and published dictionaries, grammars and a wide variety of literature in these languages;
- introduced and increased literacy through common schools, and in the process firmly established the right of women to education;
- promoted commerce by promoting trustworthiness and honesty;
- provided medical care and introduced western medical practices;
- distributed relief to sufferers in famine;
- negotiated truces that ended wars and taught values that made war less harsh;
- opposed social injustice in the form of caste, polygamy, and the mistreatment of women.

The producers of the *Ely Volume* still considered evangelism to be the first objective of missions, but it was no longer the only object.

After the Andover Controversy brought pressure on the American Board to

³Thomas Laurie, *The Ely Volume; or, The Contributions of Our Foreign Missions to Science and Human Well-Being* (Boston: ABCFM, 1881; 2d ed. revised 1885).

⁴*Ely Volume*, vii.

be more responsive to the increasingly liberal theological views of its constituency, the Board elected James L. Barton (1855-1936) foreign secretary in 1894. He served in that capacity until 1927. Under Barton's leadership the ABCFM became the most progressive and innovative major mission board in America.

In a series of articles in the *Missionary Herald*, titled "By Products of Missionary Work," and published in 1912 as *Human Progress Through Missions*,⁵ Barton outlined the "changes in methods of approach to the people" that had become commonplace through the previous twenty-five years. In stead of one "grand object" Barton described "five great departments" of missionary work: (1) evangelistic, (2) educational, (3) medical, (4) literary, and (5) industrial.

Barton promoted quality institutions of higher education in the mission field. He believed the native churches could not become fully independent of missionaries until they had a well educated laity. A Christian intelligentsia would also provide devout leadership for native society. Believing that the mission giving of the churches should not be used for these schools, he created a Higher Educational Work Endowment Fund in 1907, and raised from American laypersons of means over a million dollars to support sixteen colleges. Four of these colleges had incorporated Boards of Trustees in America, independently raising their own funds.

In the half century following Anderson's retirement his philosophy of missions had been replaced. The trend addressed the whole gospel to the whole person, material as well as spiritual. Neither the missionary nor the native Christian could entirely separate the gospel from its expression in Western civilization, and consequently much culture was exported with the "whole gospel." The new reliance on large institutions created a problem for devolution. Native churches were becoming self-supporting, but missionaries remained to oversee the large educational, medical and other institutions owned by agencies in America.

Tainted Money

In March, 1905, the ABCFM announced that they had received a gift of \$100,000 from Standard Oil Company president John D. Rockefeller. Washington Gladden vigorously protested against receipt of the gift because of Rockefeller's unscrupulous and immoral business practices. Gladden used a phrase he had coined in an 1895 article, "tainted money," and argued that the

⁵James L. Barton, *Human Progress Through Missions* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1912).

acceptance of ill-gotten gain would be harmful to the spiritual character of the recipient. Gladden and the Board each had their supporters and the debate ranged across the Congregational Churches and beyond. The great majority and the most influential defended the Board, declaring they were not responsible for how money was gained, provided it was used for good. When it was learned that the Board had solicited the gift from Rockefeller, their guilt was confirmed in the eyes of their critics.

With no real chance of success, Gladden presented a resolution to the annual meeting of the American Board in Seattle in September, 1905: "that the officers of this society should neither solicit nor invite donations to its funds from persons whose gains are generally believed to have been made by methods morally reprehensible and socially injurious." A counter resolution was presented and both referred to a committee to which Gladden was appointed. Unable to agree, the committee presented two reports. Gladden read the reports to the Board on 15 September, then presented an address of his own, "Shall Ill-Gotten Gain Be Sought for Christian Purposes?" The Board members listened quietly in the center section of the church while visitors filling the sides and rear of the hall interrupted the address with frequent enthusiastic applause. A motion to table both resolutions passed easily.

At a private conference on 1 November, the Prudential Committee assured the protestors that in the future the Board would not solicit funds from doubtful sources. Against all odds, Gladden had challenged an alliance between big missions and big money, had generated national debate, and had won a concession.

Near East Relief

In September, 1915, James Barton, ABCFM secretary, was contacted by the U. S. State Department and informed of a cable from the American ambassador in Turkey, "the destruction of the Armenian race in Turkey is rapidly progressing." On 16 September, Barton gathered a committee for Armenian relief, which was later incorporated as Near East Relief. The committee included representatives of government, Protestant Catholic and Jewish communities, and the major Protestant mission boards. The core of the committee consisted of lay trustees of Congregational and Presbyterian colleges in the Ottoman Empire. They set a goal of \$100,000 to be raised for the relief of those suffering in Southwest Asia. In the next fifteen years they raised and distributed over \$91,000,000 in aid plus \$25,000,000 in food and supplies provided by the U. S. government and others.

In 1915 war-time censorship prevented news of Armenian massacres from reaching the West. Many American Board missionaries remained at their posts, powerless to prevent the tragedy. Mission stations provided shelter and protected orphaned and abandoned children, distributing whatever food and medical supplies they had at hand. Some missionaries accompanied refugees across the mountains to Russia. Others refused to leave without the children that had come to them for protection.

Late in 1915 the Turkish government relaxed its persecutions and allowed relief work to be done. The mission schools and hospitals became refugee centers. Food, shelter and medical care – the immediate needs – were provided. When the War ended, the U. S. government's American Relief Administration took over most of the material relief; Near East Relief concentrated on care and placement of orphans. Near East Relief cared for 132,000 orphans, placing all they could in families, and preparing the rest for independent, self-sufficient living at age sixteen. At one time they administered an "orphan city" of 30,000 children in Alexandropol (renamed Leninakan).

Civil War in Russia lasted into 1922, and in Turkey until 1923. In the chaos of war, Near East Relief again provided general relief to adults, organized refugee exchanges between Greece and Turkey, and relocated orphanages when necessary.

Near East Relief was something new: a non-sectarian missionary enterprise for humanitarian relief with participation from both church and state, but independent of both. Under the direction of James Barton, and with the cooperation of the extensive ABCFM missionary force in Turkey, Near East Relief pioneered new missionary strategies, some of which set precedents for future humanitarian mission:

- appealed to the general public, without regard to religion, for aid to be given without regard to nationality or religion.
- used missionaries and other personnel already in the field to administer aid, at no expense to Near East Relief.
- made extensive use of "food for work," putting healthy refugees to work, for example sewing bedding and clothing for more refugees.
- observed absolute neutrality in politics, working with all governments. Near East Relief established its own working agreements with Soviet and Republican Turkish governments when they were not recognized by the United States government.
- followed through after the immediate crisis was over, until every child

had a home or reached the age of sixteen.

In 1928 James Barton called Near East Relief “the greatest private relief organization in history,” and estimated that over a million lives had been saved by its efforts.

PART B: MISSIONS AND CHURCHES

The **ABCFM** after the division of work with the Presbyterians in 1870 was no longer the largest mission board in America. The geography of the ABCFM changed with the withdrawal of Dutch Reformed (1857) and Presbyterian (1870) missions, the completion of devolution in Hawaii (1863), and transfer of American Indian missions to the American Missionary Association (1883). The ABCFM continued several missions, and entered new fields.⁶ The first member of the **Christian** denomination to go as a missionary, Isaac Scott, was an African American ordained in 1852 and sent to Liberia by the Colonization Society. In 1887 Christians of the North and South united in sending out their first missionaries under the sponsorship of the denomination.⁷ The General Conference of **German Congregational Churches** began sending missionaries to Argentina in 1927 in response to a request from German Russians there in 1921. In 1935 this mission expanded to German Russians in adjoining parts of Brazil. The **Reformed Church in the United States** (RCUS) began a mission to Japan in 1879 and to Hunan Province of China in 1900. The **Evangelical Synod**, supported its adopted mission in east-central India. The **American Missionary Association** began work in Puerto Rico in 1899. The **Afro-Christian Convention** extended into Guyana and Barbados in 1909, organizing church work begun by Joseph A. Johnson of Guyana.

Several missions and churches are of particular significance to the history of the United Church of Christ because of their inclusion by immigration or as conferences.

⁶The ABCFM continued its missions to the Zulu of South Africa, across Turkey including the Balkans, in West India, South India, Sri Lanka, Fuzhou (Foochow) in China, and North China, and in Micronesia in cooperation with the Hawaiian Missionary Society. In 1869 they began a major missionary enterprise in Japan (See Chapter 15, Part F, Mission to Japan). In 1872 they absorbed another society with missions in “Papal Lands”—Mexico, Spain, and the Austrian Empire (now Czech Republic). Then followed new missions to West Central Africa (Angola; 1880), South China (1883), East Central Africa (Zimbabwe; 1893), and the Philippines (1902).

⁷The Christian denomination initiated missions in Japan (1887) and Puerto Rico (1901).

Haoles⁸ and Hawaiians⁹

In 1863 the Hawaiian Mission closed, leaving the Hawaiian Evangelical Association (HEA) on its own. However, many of the former missionaries and their children became Hawaiian citizens and pastors of the HEA. Although functioning in the Hawaiian language, the HEA continued to be directed by missionary descendants, who now looked upon themselves as Hawaiian.

From 1864 to 1893 conflict over its constitution disturbed the political life of Hawaii. The king arbitrarily exerted greater power, in order to preserve the Hawaiian identity of Hawaii in the face of increasing immigration. There were Hawaiians and haoles on both sides, however the HEA, both haole and Hawaiian, at first opposed the deterioration of democracy. After 1876 haoles developed large sugar plantations and imported immigrant laborers; now the haole sugar planters, some of whom were missionary descendants, opposed both royal power and democracy. In 1893 a haole revolution instigated by sugar planters and supported by other missionary descendants overthrew the monarchy, and established a “republic” which the United States annexed in 1898. Missionary descendants continued to communicate with the American Board, and influenced its opinion in opposition to Hawaiian royalty. As a result many Hawaiians felt alienated from the HEA, now dominated by haoles, and withdrew.

Hawaii's Ethnic Mosaic

In 1868 the Hawaiian Evangelical Association board appointed S. P. Aheong its first Chinese evangelist. An indentured laborer who married a Hawaiian and learned English, Aheong preached for two years before returning to China. The Hawaiian Board imported Chinese pastors, and in 1879 Sit Moon founded the first Chinese church in Hawaii. Some sugar planters supported churches for their workers and paid the pastor's salary.

Some Portuguese came to Hawaii on whaling ships, others came to work on the plantations. The Hawaiian Board brought a Portuguese-speaking Protestant pastor to Hawaii, Antonio V. Soars, who organized a Portuguese Evangelical Church in Honolulu in 1892.

Japanese came to Hawaii beginning in 1885 as contract laborers and by 1896 constituted one-fourth of the population of the islands. Kenjiro Aoki, a theology student from Doshisha University in Japan came with the first group of

⁸“foreigners,” or non-Hawaiians, generally used to refer to Caucasians from North America.

⁹For earlier material on the church in Hawaii go to Chapter 7, Part B, Hawaii.

laborers. Under the leadership of the Methodists more Japanese seminary students came and churches were organized. In 1891 the Methodist Board of Missions, lacking funds, turned this Japanese work over to the Hawaiian Board, which brought more pastors from Japan and organized more churches. Christians in Japan organized a Hawaiian Missionary Association in 1903 to support this work.

Filipinos came to Hawaii beginning in 1906. From 1909 to 1935 over 122,000 Filipinos came. José Alba, who began holding services in his home in 1911, was ordained by the HEA in 1914. Simon Ygloria, ordained in the Philippines, came to Hawaii in 1913. Filipino churches were organized beginning in 1915.

The ABCFM provided aid to ethnic churches on Hawaii until 1903, after which time the American Missionary Association and Congregational Home Missionary Society provided aid. In 1904 the Hawaiian Evangelical Association, previously an ethnically Hawaiian and haole organization, extended membership to every Congregational and Presbyterian church in the territory without regard to language or race.

The Church in Samoa¹⁰

Samoa's exposure to the corrupting influence of the West increased when a German business firm located its Pacific headquarters there in 1857. The rivalry of European powers prevented Samoa from losing its independence until 1900, when Germany took possession of the western islands and the United States occupied the East. During World War I New Zealand occupied the German possession and after the war administered it as a mandate of the League of Nations. Meanwhile the church in Samoa achieved self-support, sent out its own missionaries across the Pacific, and developed its own style of church life.

The Samoan church developed its distinctive church polity that expressed traditional Samoan respect for elders and decision-making by consensus. As Samoans had adopted Christianity as a *community*, not just as individuals, the result was more of a parish church than a gathered church. The local pastor became leader of the community, as well as the church. In 1875 the *Fono tele* ("big meeting" or "General Assembly") of the church in Samoa was initiated as an occasion for consultation with the missionaries. In 1893 lay representatives were included, and the body assumed more authority. In 1898 responsibility for

¹⁰For earlier material on the church in Samoa go to Chapter 7, Part B, Samoa.

ordination was transferred from the local church to the *Fono tele*.

In 1906 the church changed its constitution, transferring the placement of pastors from the congregation to the district meeting. The 1906 constitution also created the *Au Toeaina* (Council of Elders), consisting of 45 persons, ordained and lay, elected by the districts. In theory the *Au Toeaina* was only advisory, but as its members were selected for their wisdom and were respected, the *Fono tele* did not act without the approval of the *Au Toeaina*. When the London Missionary Society proposed in 1906 that Samoans fill the position of district superintendents, the Samoans opposed. Although Samoans had a strong and effective tradition of collective leadership, each local community resisted direction from a person outside the community. In 1928 the *O le Au Taitai tausil le Ekalesia* (or “Company of Church Leaders”) assumed oversight of the districts.

The Samoan church took over direction of the mission’s high schools, college, and press in 1916, and in 1922 achieved full self-support, including the salaries and pensions of the remaining missionaries.

Samoan missionaries preached the gospel in New Guinea, Kiribati, and other islands, accompanied Samoan chiefs exiled to Saipan in the Mariana Islands, and worked with Solomon Islanders brought to Samoa to work on plantations.¹¹

Puerto Rico

Following the annexation of the historically Spanish Catholic island of Puerto Rico by the United States in 1898, American Protestant missionary societies occupied the island. The American Missionary Association and the United Brethren in Christ arrived in 1899. The Christian denomination came in 1901. The Protestant denominations divided the island by comity agreement. Congregationalists occupied the eastern end of the island, including Humacao and Fajardo. United Brethren occupied the south-central area around Ponce. Christians came to a small area on the coast east of Ponce.

Seven Protestant denominations cooperated in the Evangelical Union of Puerto Rico. Together they published a religious paper, conducted a theological seminary,¹² and held summer conferences. By the late 1920s missions and

¹¹For information on Samoans in the United States go to Chapter 21, Part A, Samoan Congregationalists in America.

¹²Seminario Evangelico de Puerto Rico was organized in 1919 by six cooperating denominations.

churches were discussing church union. The formation of a united church was linked in their minds to greater independence from the missionary societies. People were not members of a particular denomination by choice, but by geography. Denominational distinctions were irrelevant to the Puerto Ricans.

Discussions between the United Brethren and the Congregationalists collapsed in May of 1929, because of opposition of a few native Congregationalist pastors. By December United Brethren and Presbyterians were preparing a Plan of Union. On 5 March 1930, representatives of the seven Protestant denominations in the Evangelical Union of Puerto Rico agreed to a Plan of Union, using the plan developed by the United Brethren and Presbyterians as the starting point. The Plan was then submitted to the churches and mission boards for their approval. The Methodists held back because of pressure from their bishop, but United Brethren, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Christians had all voted in favor by mid-May. However, following a Presbytery meeting in September the Presbyterians withdrew. The Iglesia Evangelica Unida de Puerto Rico (IEUPR) was organized on 28 January 1931, composed of United Brethren, Congregationalists, and Christians, using the Plan of Union developed by the seven denominations, and hopeful that other denominations would join later.

The Iglesia Evangelica Unida was organized into two districts, Humacao (Congregational) and Ponce (United Brethren and Christian). Once created, the new church moved toward greater unity and independence. In 1933 the IEUPR asked the mission boards to send funds to the united church, rather than to their district. In 1935 the church entered a fifteen year plan to gradually reduce subsidies and achieve self-support.

As Puerto Rico has debated the relationship it should have with the United States – statehood, commonwealth or independence – the IEUPR has also debated its relationship to the denominations in the United States. In 1955 the Congregational Christian Churches in the United States recognized it as a constituent conference. In 1961, after each local congregation voted, the IEUPR voted to become a Conference of the United Church of Christ.

The IEUPR favored the relationship with the Congregationalists over the United Brethren, as Congregationalists treated the IEUPR as a constituent conference of the denomination, while the Evangelical United Brethren treated them as a foreign mission.¹³

¹³For more information on the church in Puerto Rico go to Chapter 21, Part A, Hispanic Ministry.

The Philippines

Protestant missionaries arrived in the Philippines in the middle of a revolution. In 1896 Emilio Aguinaldo began a war of liberation against the Spanish. In 1898 the United States replaced the Spanish, but the war went on until 1902. To some nationalists the Roman Catholic Church was an agent of Spanish oppression, which they rejected. They showed an interest in Protestant missions from the beginning. With their novel doctrine of separation of church and state the American Protestants managed to maintain enough distance between themselves and their government to be credible to many Filipinos. Protestant preaching received an immediate response from Filipino intellectuals, and slowly spread to the general population.

Presbyterian missionary James B. Rodgers (1865-1944) arrived in Manila in 1899. Presbyterian missionaries moved from Manila south, establishing stations on southern Luzon and the central islands. Methodists arrived in 1901 and established stations from Manila north. The United Brethren in Christ arrived in 1901 and concentrated their work in northwest Luzon, in the southern part of the Ilokano ethnic area. The Disciples of Christ also arrived in 1901 and worked in the northern part of the Ilokano ethnic area and other scattered locations. These denominations and the Baptists joined in an Evangelical Union in 1901. They made a comity agreement, assuring each denomination an exclusive location, and agreed to all call their churches “the Evangelical Church” with the denomination’s name in parentheses.

The ABCFM arrived in 1902 and was assigned the southern island of Mindanao, inhabited mostly by Muslims and traditional religionists. From the beginning the American Board mission was an extension of the larger Presbyterian mission. Presbyterian native pastors and an occasional American Presbyterian missionary were assigned to work with the American Board. Presbyterians among new settlers to Mindanao provided the first church members.

Presbyterians and Congregationalists began cooperating in educational work in 1920. A plan of union for the two groups was developed and approved by the Presbyterians. Before the American Board churches could act on the proposal they needed a regional organization. They organized as the Presbytery of Cagayan in 1922. Having adopted Presbyterian polity, the American Board churches had no problem working with the Presbyterian Synod.

The movement for unity initiated by the mission boards was at this point broadened and turned over to the Filipino churches. The United Brethren

Conference and an interdenominational United Church of Manila joined the Presbyterian Synod and the Presbytery of Cagayan in forming the United Evangelical Church of the Philippines in 1929.¹⁴

PART C: WAR AND PEACE

The Peace Movement, 1861-1917¹⁵

Slavery was a state of constant warfare in the opinion of many peace advocates. When forced to choose between peace and a war to end slavery they chose war, supported the Civil War, and the peace movement yielded.

After the Civil War, the United States was saturated with a nationalistic and militaristic spirit. However, a small American Peace Society, now more conservative, continued to advocate for arbitration and a World Court. James Browning Miles (1823-75), Congregational pastor and secretary of the American Peace Society, advocated the codification of international law. He convened conferences in Brussels in 1873 and Geneva in 1874, which led to the organization of the International Law Association.

Peace advocates in the late nineteenth century were often patriotic, believing the United States had a mission to bring peace to the world. When the Spanish-American War broke out in 1898, some peace advocates opposed it; others, like Lyman Abbott, called it a “noble war” and supported the extension of United States power.

In the period from 1898 to 1914 peace advocacy gained popularity within the cultural establishment of the country. Frederick Lynch (1867-1934), a Congregational minister and editor, cultivated the friendship of philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. In February, 1914, Carnegie gave an endowment of \$2,000,000 and created the Church Peace Union to administer it, with Lynch as executive secretary. Lynch channeled most of the funds to a Commission on Peace and Arbitration of the Federal Council of Churches (FCC). Congregationalist Charles S. Macfarland (1866-1956), executive of the FCC, cooperated closely with Lynch. Sidney L. Gulick¹⁶ (1860-1945), ABCFM

¹⁴For further information on the Philippines go to Chapter 17, Part C, the Church in the Philippines.

¹⁵For earlier information on the peace movement go to Chapter 8, Part C.

¹⁶pronounced “Gyew-lick.”

missionary to Japan, returned to America in 1913 and with the support of Lynch and Macfarland he spoke widely and lobbied Congress to end Japanese exclusion and to improve Japanese-American relations. For a brief time peace was fashionable and appealed to the powerful.

This establishment peace movement had fatal weaknesses. Dependant on an industrialist's benevolence, they felt obliged to honor their benefactor's wishes and not associate with more radical peace groups. Working through the FCC, which sought to represent Protestantism in general through consensus, Lynch and associates were prevented from becoming too "controversial" in their peace advocacy. This establishment peace movement was swept into the war fever of 1917 by the appealing idealistic slogans of President Wilson, to fight a crusade, the war to end all wars. The Church Peace Union, Macfarland and Gulick, supported the National Committee on the Church and the Moral Aims of the War.

Young pastors and lay people of many denominations, critical of the weakness of the establishment peace movement, gathered in Garden City, New York, on 11 November 1915, and organized the Fellowship of Reconciliation. Members of this new organization declared themselves unwilling to fight in war, and committed to fight social injustice through nonviolent means. Congregational pastors Sydney Strong (1860-1938) of Seattle, and Abraham J. Muste (1885-1967)¹⁷ of Newtonville, Massachusetts, were among the founders.

War Fever

All of the churches fell in line to support the war effort in 1917. Their first concern was pastoral care of the "boys" in the service. The FCC's General War-Time Commission of the Churches coordinated the efforts of parallel commissions in each denomination with the War Department. Each denomination recruited chaplains, supplied them, aided churches in the vicinity of military camps in this country in ministering to the soldiers, and helped each local church keep in touch with their young men in the war.

Most ministers went further, promoting the "moral aims of the war," and the sale of bonds on "Liberty Bond Sunday." Some of their rhetoric generated hatred for the enemy, and suspicion of the Germans in America.

The most notorious propagandist against the Germans was Newell Dwight Hillis (1858-1929), pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, Brooklyn. He spoke over 400 times in the second Liberty Bond drive, emotionally motivating his

¹⁷Muste left the Congregational denomination in 1918.

hearers with tales of atrocities by German soldiers. Hillis demonstrated a disregard for the fact in telling his stories. He wrote:

Society has organized itself against the rattlesnake and the yellow fever. Shepherds have entered into a conspiracy to exterminate the wolves. The Board of Health are planning to wipe out typhoid, cholera, and black plague. Not otherwise, lovers of their fellow-men have finally become perfectly hopeless with reference to the German people. They have no more relation to the civilization of 1918 than an orang-outang, a gorilla, a Judas, a hyena, a thumbscrew, or a scalping knife in the hands of society. These brutes must be cast out of society.¹⁸

Hillis went on to outline a scheme for genocide: sterilization of ten million German soldiers and segregation of the women.

Hillis said of many German Americans, “while their lips announce that they are Americans, in their heart they feel that their first loyalty is to the Kaiser.” Suspected of being spies, they could become the targets of violence or vandalism at any time. Some “patriotic” Americans expressed their enthusiasm by making war on the German language. South Dakota banned the use of German on the telephone or in meetings of three or more persons. Montana banned the use of German in the pulpit.

The Evangelical Synod and World War I

Federal marshals arrested Paul Krusius (b. 1879)¹⁹ on 22 August 1917 as he was about to board a train in Steubenville, Ohio. Pastor of Saint Johns Evangelical Church near Powhatan Point, Ohio, Krusius was on his way to begin his new position, professor at Elmhurst College. After a stay of four weeks in the county jail in Columbus, the military transported Krusius to an internment camp, Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. The authorities told Krusius he was a threat to the security of southern Ohio, but never informed him of what he did to make them think that, never allowed him to confront an accuser, never charged him with a crime, and never gave him a trial. In the summer of 1919 he was deported to Germany. Other Evangelical pastors were tried for sedition and made the targets of vigilante justice.

¹⁸N. D. Hillis, *The Blot on the Kaiser's Scutcheon*, 57-59, quoted in Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms* (New York: Roundtable Press, 1933), 109.

¹⁹Not to be confused with Paul N. Crusius, longtime faculty member at Elmhurst.

The German Evangelical Synod was under attack²⁰ from without and deeply divided within. Every immigrant church passes through a period of conflict between the older generation, attached to the language and culture of the old country, and the younger generation, eager to be “American.” The War intensified that conflict in the Evangelical Synod. Other denominations took several decades to pass through the language transition; every Evangelical Synod congregation faced this issue in 1917 and 1918.

The conflict within the Evangelical Synod was not simply between the old Germans and the young Americanizers. Many young pastors opposed the war on moral grounds. This younger, English-speaking anti-war group constituted a third faction. The older generation was not a bunch of spies, “loyal to the Kaiser,” but reacted to the war against the German language and culture within the United States. President John Baltzer guided the Evangelical Synod on a middle course, with a pastoral sense, expressing the patriotism of the Synod while avoiding hyper-patriotism.

The student body at Eden Seminary harbored strong anti-war sentiments. Student Thomas R. Marshall wrote in the December, 1917, issue of *Keryx*, the student paper, that war was “nothing but legalized, organized murder.” Reinhold Niebuhr, executive secretary of the denomination’s War Welfare Commission replied in the October, 1918 issue of *Keryx*. Recognizing that “most ministers were or are pacifists,” Niebuhr questioned the sincerity of some pacifists and argued for the need to make compromises in methods in order to bring victory to principle.

In 1918 only three of the Synod’s nineteen districts held their annual meeting. The others were canceled out of fear that a meeting of Germans speaking German would be perceived by some as a meeting of spies. In their place, smaller informal pastoral conferences were held.

Niebuhr’s War Welfare Commission received complaints from two soldiers, that the word “German” in the name of the denomination on the masthead of the *Evangelical Herald*, which they received, gave them discomfort. This renewed the movement to change the name of the denomination by taking “German” out of “German Evangelical Synod of North America.” Baltzer consulted with other church leaders. The name could only be changed by the General Conference,

²⁰The experiences of German Americans varied greatly in this period. Pennsylvania Deutsch and Russian Germans were seldom objects of suspicion. For recent immigrants from Germany, persecution was most severe in the Mid-West. Magyars had similar problems.

which would not meet until 1921. However they reached a consensus that the offensive word could be dropped from unofficial documents, and the *Evangelical Herald* simply dropped the denomination's name from the masthead. At the General Conference in 1921, after two days of debate, the word "German" was dropped from the denomination's name.

Niebuhr complained frequently about the editorial policy of Julius Horstman in the *Evangelical Herald*. Niebuhr's War Welfare commission urged Baltzer, "to take stricter surveillance over the policy in our denominational publications and to take such steps as necessary to guarantee an unequivocal American attitude in our periodicals."²¹

In the *Evangelical Herald* Horstman had editorialized against compulsory military service, against war, against hyper-patriotism, against labeling opponents of war as disloyal, against the war fever of the press, for prophetic anti-war preaching, in support of the more radical anti-war groups, in defense of conscientious objectors, against anti-German hysteria, and against the suppression of the German language. He wrote,

The world has become accustomed to war by thousands of years of cruel and bloody conflict. So called Christian nations have continually been at war with each other. War has been carried on in behalf of the Church, and the Church herself has sometimes engaged in war. But all this does not change in the least the fact that warfare is un-Christian and therefore incompatible with the principles and aims for which the Church must stand if she desires to remain true to her Founder, Head and Lord, and to herself. The Churches therefore have every right to be opposed to war on principle. . . . It follows from this that the Church as such cannot be expected to support war or war measures, or to encourage or promote anything that may be construed as an approval of war. (9 Aug 1917).

Evangelical Synod congregations came under steady pressure to use English, and many made the change during the war. English was usually adopted in the Sunday School before the worship service. From 1913 to 1920 the proportion of Evangelical Synod Sunday Schools using only English rose from 25% to 59%, those using only German declined from 53% to 19%.

The Evangelical Synod had passed through the most severe crisis of its

²¹War Welfare Commission, May 1, 1918. Eden Archives.

history. It emerged a more American church, strongly professing its loyalty to the nation that had persecuted it, and practicing an American freedom of expression and tolerance of divergent views.